



**MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION  
7447 E. INDIAN SCHOOL ROAD  
ONE CIVIC - 1st FLOOR  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE ROOMS  
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA 85251  
THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 2006  
5:00PM**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Art DeCabooter, Chairman  
Carla  
Erik Filsinger  
Joan Fudala (departed at 5:53 p.m.)  
Melinda Gulick  
Rand Hubbell  
Gerry Miller  
Virginia Korte  
Arnold Roy  
Linda Whitehead  
Solange Whitehead

**STAFF:** Bob Cafarella

**ALSO PRESENT:** Tiffany Carlson  
Annie Collins  
Dan Gruber  
Lisa Gurtler  
Kathy Howard  
Jan Rau  
Tom Silverman

**1. Call To Order And Introductions**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman DeCabooter at 5:04 p.m. He welcomed Commissioner Hubbell, who introduced himself. Commissioner Carla expressed delight that Commissioner Hubbell has joined the Commission.

2. **Approval of April 6, 2006, and Joint May 4, 2006, Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Carla noted a correction to Commissioner Hubbell's name on the minutes of the May 4, 2006 joint meeting. Ms. Kovach is no longer a Commissioner; Her name shall be deleted from the list of those who were absent.

**COMMISSIONER FUDALA MOVED ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 6, 2006 REGULAR MEETING AND THE AMENDED MINUTES OF THE MAY 4, 2006 JOINT MEETING. COMMISSIONER KORTE SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED BY A UNANIMOUS VOTE OF ELEVEN (11) TO ZERO (0).**

3. **Desert Discovery Center at the Gateway-Concept and Funding-Commissioners**

Mr. Bob Cafarella, McDowell Sonoran Preserve Director, reviewed the Desert Discovery Center concept, noting that there are benefits to the Preserve. He explained that the consultant gave the Tourism Development Commission and the Desert Discovery Center Planning Committee exactly what was requested. Much work remains to be done outside of the scope that the consultant was asked to address. Mr. Cafarella noted that some people are anxious to push forward with the Desert Discovery Center in order to maximize private donations; however it is important to have answers to many of the questions that have been raised.

Mr. Tom Silverman of the Desert Discovery Center Planning Committee gave a brief overview of the history of the Desert Discovery Center concept. He stressed that the consultants did not attempt to decide how the plans would be implemented. He opined that this is a great opportunity to build on the non-profit partnership the City has with the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and should not be viewed as a competition. If City Council chooses to create a new non-profit board to run the Desert Discovery Center, it would enhance existing partnerships.

He outlined the next steps in the process, noting that City Council needs to give direction on the preferred operating entity for the Desert Discovery Center. A more specific operating plan can then be written. The draft will be brought to the Commission and to the Tourism Development Commission. The Desert Discovery Center Planning Committee hopes to maintain momentum for fund-raising purposes, because the Center has always been envisioned as a private-public partnership, and other projects are competing for donations. Mr. Silverman summarized that the Desert Discovery Center will be a great amenity for Scottsdale residents and visitors.

Commissioner Miller commented that he had requested that this be placed on the agenda for discussion, noting that many questions were either not raised or not answered at the joint meeting. No opposition to the project was expressed. Commissioner Miller expressed concern about the governance of the Center, suggesting that the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission might have to get involved in some of the financial issues.

Although he has no desire to impede the momentum of the project, Commissioner Miller wants to ensure that the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission properly reviews the project and suggested that an ad hoc committee be formed by the Preserve Commission in order to accomplish this. Commissioner Miller opined that there is no need to wait for

the formation of an operating body to write an operating plan. It is essential that the costs the City would incur be reviewed. He suggested that the review committee could bring back a preliminary report on the questions by the July 6 meeting.

Commissioner Fudala expressed confusion regarding the costs presented at the joint meeting. Mr. Cafarella explained that there may be additional capital and operating costs to the City if the Desert Discovery Center is built, aside from the cost of constructing the Gateway facility. At this point, additional costs are an unknown factor. The Preserve has already made a contribution to the Desert Discovery Center in the form of land.

Commissioner Carla opined that the question would be whether there would be an annual City line item for building maintenance and similar expenses in the budget. The plan has always been that the Center, even if built with some private donations, would become a City building. City Council direction is needed in order for an operating plan to be drafted.

Commissioner Fudala asked whether the line items would be an extension of current line items that cover the Gateway Center. Commissioner Carla replied that this could be an option for City Council.

Commissioner Gulick opined that it is incumbent upon the Preserve Commission to give some direction to City Council and stressed the importance of the Commission obtaining answers to those questions. She added that as Chair of the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy, she knows that the Conservancy has questions. The Commission and the Conservancy are both stakeholders in the Desert Discovery Center and have a huge contribution to make towards its success.

Commissioner Solange Whitehead concurred with Commissioner Gulick's remarks that the Preserve Commission should make recommendations to City Council. The Commission possesses a wealth of information that could contribute to the success of the project. She supports the formation of a committee to review these questions. There are many non-profit partners who can contribute to the Desert Discovery Center.

Commissioner Linda Whitehead opined that this project is appropriately a joint effort of Tourism and Preservation. It is important that the Preservation interests be represented to make sure that the land is used appropriately and Tourism interests are represented so that it becomes a good feature for visitors. The Commission has a responsibility to provide input to City Council.

Mr. Silverman agreed that there is a need for the Preserve Commission to give input to City Council. Commissioner Carla noted that everyone agrees that input is needed. The question is how best to do that. She was not convinced of the need for an ad hoc committee.

Commissioner Filsinger commented that the Promotion Committee deals with similar themes and would be best suited to review the Desert Discovery Center, rather than forming another committee.

Commissioner Linda Whitehead agreed that one or other of the two standing committees should perform the review. Commissioner Carla explained that there are two separate

planning committees. The Planning Committee for the Preserve Commission makes recommendations to the Commission on all management matters within the Preserve. The Desert Discovery Center Planning Committee is a privately initiated effort which is chaired by Mr. Silverman. Commissioner Carla stressed that every time there has been a step forward on the Desert Discovery Center, the Preserve Commission was given a review.

A discussion ensued on the process to follow, the scope of work, and the pros and cons of forming an ad hoc committee versus using an existing committee. Commissioner Carla suggested that a joint meeting of the planning and promotion committees be held to review Commissioner Miller's questions and any others identified, and bring recommendations to the Preserve Commission for review. Staff could then bring the recommendations to City Council over the summer.

Commissioner Fudala asked whether the Tourism Development Commission is doing something similar. Mr. Silverman replied that they have made a recommendation of committing funds from the bed tax. Chairman DeCabooter suggested that the Tourism Development Commission could be invited to partner in the process. Commissioner Carla noted that the Tourism Development Commission has reviewed the report twice, has held meetings and supports moving forward with the knowledge that there are still issues to be addressed. After City Council has given direction, a more definitive operating plan will be written.

Commissioner Miller distributed a list of 13 questions devised from the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission's point of view. He noted that the Conservancy people will have other concerns and questions.

Commissioner Korte opined that the Commission would be premature in moving forward on detailed questions until plans are firmer.

Commissioner Linda Whitehead noted that although the Preserve Commission should not attempt to micromanage the project, the Commission has an obligation to provide some guidance to City Council. Many of Commissioner Miller's questions are general level concerns.

Commissioner Miller asked Mr. Silverman whether the Desert Discovery Center Planning Committee has a model in mind for the management of the Desert Discovery Center. Mr. Silverman made reference to different options.

Commissioner Hubbell opined that the Desert Discovery Center is a great project. He noted concern with the source of the figures contained in the report. He felt it is unlikely that the Desert Discovery Center will be a profitable entity in the early years. He is concerned as to how the Desert Discovery Center will mesh with the Preserve and felt that this should be the primary concern of the Commission.

Commissioner Linda Whitehead concurred with Commissioner Hubbell's concerns regarding the financial projections and queried the possibility of shortfalls being funded with Preserve tax monies.

Commissioner Filsinger summarized that he heard some concern for the joint committee having a mission and scope for this action, yet at the same time there is concern that the

Commission be put in the position of trying to do some detailed planning. Perhaps the work product from the joint committee should be a list of questions and issues that could be brought forward. Chairman DeCabooter agreed with this summarization.

**COMMISSIONER FUDALA MADE A MOTION THAT A COMBINATION OF THE PLANNING AND PROMOTION COMMITTEES MEET TO DISCUSS THE MOST PERTINENT ISSUES TO BE BROUGHT BACK TO THE COMMISSION FOR FORWARDING TO CITY COUNCIL. COMMISSIONER SOLANGE WHITEHEAD SECONDED THE MOTION.**

After confirming with Chairman DeCabooter that all Commissioners may attend the joint meeting, Commissioner Miller asked whether there is an avenue for public input.

Mr. Cafarella undertook to publicize the meeting to people on their mailing list. Commissioner Carla noted that when the 1999 report was done, public focus groups were held. She acknowledged that staff will organize meetings for the general public later on in the process and interested parties are always welcome to attend and participate in meetings. She expressed hopes that the Commission supports the concept of the Desert Discovery Center, and recalled the support from the Tourism Development Commission and businesspeople when the Preserve was established.

Commissioner Gulick expressed support for the Desert Discovery Center and noted that the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy is holding simultaneous conversations about potential partnerships and collaborations.

**THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY A VOTE OF ELEVEN (11) TO ZERO (0).**

**4. Preserve Needs Spreadsheet**

Mr. Cafarella distributed the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Management and Maintenance Needs Timeline that was drafted for the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy retreat earlier in the year and reviewed various activities listed on the spreadsheet. Mr. Cafarella told the meeting that in his opinion the most significant need is to expand the patrols and monitoring in the remote areas of the State land. He added that staff will bring this document back to the Commission as it is developed each year.

Commissioner Linda Whitehead reported that the area of State land that is closed to motor vehicles is disregarded. The police are willing to enforce the regulations, however she opined that the signage should be improved. The police need adequate maps to identify which areas of State land are closed to all use and which are closed to motor vehicle access. The State Land Department has provided a verbal description of the areas but no map.

Mr. Cafarella reported that Preserve Manager Claire Miller recently met with the Fire Department and the Police Department and suggested that more volunteer help is needed as the first line of defense.

Commissioner Linda Whitehead reiterated that there are various levels of restrictions in the area west of the power lines, but neither the police nor the Preserve know the precise delineations of the restrictions between motor vehicles allowed, closed to all use, and closed to motor vehicle use. The signage is confusing and conflicting, making

police enforcement impossible. She suggested working with the State Land Department to clarify the boundaries of the restricted areas. The police department is responsible for enforcement and wants to do a better job of enforcement but needs detailed information.

Commissioner Carla commented that this is critical and reminded the Commission that the Preserve staff and the Conservancy do everything they can. The new police unit will need to take this task on board as officers are trained for this assignment.

5. **Update: State Land Reform**

Commissioner Carla expressed special thanks to Kathy Howard, the top signature collector for the initiative. She thanked Commissioner Linda Whitehead for her efforts. The final petition sheets will be submitted to the State within the next two weeks.

6. **Election of Commission Vice-Chair and Promotion Committee Chair-Commissioners**

**COMMISSIONER CARLA NOMINATED COMMISSIONER FILSINGER FOR THE POSITION OF VICE-CHAIR. COMMISSIONER LINDA WHITEHEAD SECONDED THE NOMINATION, WHICH CARRIED BY A UNANIMOUS VOTE OF NINE (9) TO ZERO (0). COMMISSIONER FILSINGER ABSTAINED.**

**COMMISSIONER FILSINGER NOMINATED COMMISSIONER SOLANGE WHITEHEAD FOR THE POSITION OF CHAIR OF THE PROMOTION COMMITTEE. COMMISSIONER LINDA WHITEHEAD SECONDED THE NOMINATION, WHICH CARRIED BY A UNANIMOUS VOTE OF NINE (9) TO ZERO (0). COMMISSIONER SOLANGE WHITEHEAD ABSTAINED.**

7. **Director's Report**

Noting that he would combine the Director's report with the Preserve Manager's report, Mr. Cafarella reported that Ms. Miller is working on several projects, including clean-up and additional planting in Lost Dog Wash. Some of the larger barrel cactus planted there have not survived. The restrooms should be open soon. The gate will be functioning tomorrow morning. Construction of the bridge is scheduled and it will be in place in good time for the major event in November.

Mr. Cafarella added that it may make more sense to consider opening the Gateway access area in the fall rather than in May, to coincide with McDowell Sonoran Month. The May opening of Lost Dog Wash had put pressure on all concerned.

Chairman DeCabooter commended Mr. Cafarella and everyone else involved with the Lost Dog Wash opening.

In response to questions by Commissioner Linda Whitehead regarding the larger barrel cactus, Mr. Cafarella committed staff to submit a report on the causes.

8. **Preserve Managers Report**

See agenda item 7.

9. **Summer Schedule**

Chairman DeCabooter initiated a discussion on the summer schedule. The consensus was that the joint committee meeting will occur in July. The next meeting of the Commission will be held on August 3, 2006. Commissioners Korte and Solange Whitehead are unable to attend the August 3rd meeting.

10. **Future Executive Session for McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission:**

**COMMISSIONER MILLER MADE A MOTION TO HOLD AN EXECUTIVE SESSION ON AUGUST 3, 2006, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PUBLIC BODY AND CONSULTATION WITH CITY ATTORNEY FOR LEGAL ADVICE TO CONSIDER ITS POSITION AND INSTRUCT ITS REPRESENTATIVES REGARDING NEGOTIATING FOR PURCHASE OR LEASE OF REAL PROPERTY FOR INCLUSION IN THE MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE. ARS 38-431.03 (A) (3) AND (A) (7). COMMISSIONER GULICK SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED BY A UNANIMOUS VOTE OF TEN (10) TO ZERO (0).**

11. **Commissioner Comments and Public Comments**

Commissioner Carla reported that on Saturday, November 4, 2006, the Conservancy and the City will be partnering with the Smithsonian Institution to bring a CultureFest event to the Preserve for the first time.

The first ever McDowell Sonoran Preserve Field Guide is at the printers and will be published by the end of June. Copies can be ordered through the Conservancy website.

Commissioner Gulick commended Commissioner Carla for her role in getting the State Land Reform on the ballot.

Commissioner Miller mentioned that the work on invasive and noxious weeds is moving forward. Tamarisk was removed at Cave Creek. Brochures targeted to homeowners and landscapers are ready for review and graphic design.

12. **Agenda Items for Future Meetings**

Commissioner Solange Whitehead requested an overview of the financial costs to complete the acquisition of the State land during the executive session. Chairman DeCabooter indicated this could take place at the September meeting.

13. **Adjournment to Executive Session**

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, and no need for an executive session, the meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
A/V Tronics, Inc.